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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM • LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO • PLP

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Cholera in Haiti: How Many Ways Can Capitalism Kill?

PORT-AU-PRINCE, OCT. 28 — Cholera is making a comeback globally, with 100,000 deaths annually, in African countries, and in Pakistan after the floods. In the living spaces of the "wretched of the earth," workers die all the time of completely preventable diseases. Under capitalism, workers are used only to provide the cheap supply of raw materials, assembled products, and labor power for the rich.

We watch this with anguish today in the rural, rice-growing Artibonite region of Haiti, where cholera has killed around 300 people to date. The media give medical explanations of the epidemic focused on the contaminated Artibonite River, but never touch on the racism of capitalism which is the real explanation of such recurring, preventable epidemics.

The media blames "underdevelopment," about which simply, tragically, nothing can be done. Nor can much be done, apparently ("it's tied up in the Congress," explained Bill Clinton), about the criminal, total non-delivery of promised U.S. government aid, which might have helped; nor about the thousands of undistributed rehydration kits CNN's Sanjay Gupta found in a Port-au-Prince warehouse.

The Artibonite River, the largest in the island, is the heart of rich, irrigated agricultural land long used for rice-growing. When the World Bank program (with Aristide's agreement) pushed through the import of cheap U.S. rice (subsidized by the Clinton Administration), local production was crippled. On the Aeribonite River, Péligre dam is also the main source of electricity in Haiti.

The dam is now silting up and cutting the energy supply because of deforestation in the mountains. It is part of the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic and therefore the site, like all capitalist nation-state borders, of state violence against workers trying to cross in both directions. The border was closed for a day by the Dominican authorities, who subjected Haitians trying to cross, to an absurd ritual hand-washing and other tests. On the Haitian side, MINUSTAH (UN) troops tear-gassed people fleeing the epidemic. Nothing new there: the border river has often flowed with the blood of workers on both banks.

And now it is the source of cholera, as its water poisons those it once nourished. The bacterial illness is transmitted when people drink water that's been contaminated by the human waste of an infected person.

Haiti is a setup for cholera. The water purification systems are gone, so people go to the river for water. This is also where people dump their waste. The disease produces a toxin in infected individuals, who experience terrible diarrhea that can result in disabling dehydration in just a few hours. Dehydration is a death sentence for people with no access to good medical care. But it is easily treated with rehydration: you give people fluid through an IV and they will do just fine.

But why is the river so contaminated, causing cholera? And why is treat-

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Rank and File Must Bust Bosses' Rules, Dump Transit Union Hacks

NEW YORK CITY, OCTOBER 30 — As thousands of the city's mainly black, Latino and immigrant bus and subway workers are set to gather for the annual TWU Local 100 (Transport Workers Union) mass membership meeting on November 5th, MTA bosses (Metropolitan Transit Authority) are hitting transit workers with the worst attacks in recent memory.

Adding to racist unemployment — officially 19% among black men in New York City and nearly twice the official 10% unemployment rate of the city in general — The MTA laid off more than 900 Local 100 workers and offered buyouts for 600 non-union administrative employees.

Racist unemployment is a product of the capitalist system that forces double unemployment rates for U.S. black workers even in "good" times. The mass fight-back against racist MTA bosses can build the anti-racist class unity needed to overthrow the bosses' racist capitalist system and establish an anti-racist working class communist society. The Progressive Labor Party fights to unite the masses of rank-and-file workers, students, the unemployed and soldiers in action against the entire racist capitalist system.

The MTA bosses are using racist unemployment as a weapon to make Local 100, which represents most but not all of the city's MTA workers, choose between more layoffs or concessions. The city and state bosses also chose to challenge Local 100's recent contract arbitration award even though the award is patterned after the unchallenged city's cops' and firefighters' contracts, who got even better deals than transit but have mainly white workforces. The MTA has even pitted riders against transit workers by implying that the recent fare hikes are caused in part by "overly

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Yemen Threat, Iraq Atrocities Steer Focus Back to War in Oil-rich Mid-East

The Rockefeller-led U.S. imperialist wing which Obama serves couldn't have asked for more timely delivery from UPS and FedEx. Arriving the weekend before Election Day, the Yemeni parcel bombs helped shift attention, for a while at least, back to widening U.S. wars.

Until recently, this year's election had centered almost entirely on the domestic, economic crisis facing U.S. rulers. It reflected a sharpening battle among various U.S. capitalists, waged between the Tea Partiers and the liberal politicians serving the dominant, imperialist faction.

Those forces financing the Tea party, especially the Texas billionaire Koch brothers, are focused on short-run, immediate profits, favoring tax cuts for the rich and little or no financial regulation. The Rockefeller-led group represents the long-range interests of U.S. capitalism, more dependent for profits from, and control of, foreign oil, making imperialist wars abroad vital for their system's survival. The Tea Party election struggle has been overshadowing the main wing's most urgent efforts overseas.

The owners of U.S.-based giants like Exxon-Mobil and JP Morgan Chase seek to secure the greater Middle East by force, both for its geostrategic energy supplies and to counter rival Iranian, Chinese and Russian expansion.

The bomb-plot headlines about stepping up U.S. attacks in Yemen — which borders Big Oil's crown jewel in neighboring Saudi Arabia — edged out the latest election-related blurbs from Sarah Palin or the Daily Show. And just a week before the latest Yemeni threat broke, Wikileaks' dumping of 400,000 incriminating war documents had turned the spotlight on Iraq, and indirectly on Iran.

Wikileaks Helps Brass Write Manual for the Next War

A seething Iraqi civil war, arising in large part from the U.S. missteps Wikileaks highlights, prevents oil companies like Exxon from realizing the six billion barrels per day (bbd) U.S. rulers hoped for when they invaded Iraq in 2003. Production has hardly reached 2.5 bbd.

Masquerading as anti-war and anti-establishment, Wikileaks actually furnishes a self-critical "what-not-to-do" guide for the Pentagon's coming U.S. clash with Iran. Lacking any legitimate incentive, U.S. brass must rely on anti-Islamic racism to motivate troops to kill. But continued racist mass civilian "collateral-damage" deaths and torturing and murdering prisoners could spark a widespread anti-U.S. Islamic rebellion, reversing any or all U.S. military gains. Exxon could lose its top source of oil in Saudi Arabia.

Main U.S. Rulers Bent on War Despite Tea Party Gains

Wikileaks and the Yemen plot inject a war focus into the often distracting electoral system that history has saddled on otherwise dominant imperialist U.S. rulers. Every two years just about anybody with enough money can buy a seat in Congress. The main Rockefeller faction worries that Koch brothers-type U.S. capitalists will rally an anti-tax Tea Party voter base to elect representatives that would hinder capitalism's long-range need for its war machine.

The leading U.S. imperialist think-tank, the liberal, Rockefeller-funded Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), has been running a lengthy series titled "Foreign Policy and the 2010 Midterms," highlighting, in the case of Afghanistan, "Doubts Over the Mission" and "Funding the War."

And the Wall Street Journal, owned by Republican, but imperialist, Rupert Murdoch, worries, "At issue is whether candidates backed by Tea-party activists may force a shift in the terms of debate over the war in Afghanistan. While Republicans are traditionally hawkish on defense — and foreign policy hasn't emerged as a major campaign issue — some GOP candidates have expressed skepticism about the scale of U.S. military involvement in the region." (10/27/10)

On Election Eve, liberal imperialist thinkers were wishing that the incoming Tea Partiers would prove ultimately more imperialist-minded. Stephen Biddle, a CFR fellow, hopes for a GOP split: "One of the divides in the Tea Party is between hard-core libertarians who just plain believe in smaller government, and are basically isolationist in their foreign policy, versus more traditionally conservative Republican Tea Partiers who tend to believe that the non-defense parts of the government are what needs cutting." (Public Radio International, 10/19)

Frank Rich, the liberal New York Times top Obama watcher, also foresaw a similar pro-imperialist silver lining in Republican election gains:

"Trent Lott, the former Senate leader and current top-dog lobbyist, gave away the game in July. 'We don't need a lot of Jim DeMint disciples,' he said, referring to the South Carolina senator who is the Tea Party's Capitol Hill patron saint. 'As soon as they get here, we need to co-opt them.' It's the players who wrote the checks for the G.O.P. surge [a la Koch brothers' types], not those earnest folk

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Wikileaks: Another Liberal Rulers' Mouthpiece

Wikileaks didn't fall from the sky. Its mastermind Julian Assange sports a lengthening liberal imperialist pedigree. In June, a profile in the ultra-liberal, Establishment New Yorker magazine canonized him as a quirky but supremely well-intentioned truth seeker. Assange and pals were front-runners for a $500,000 grant from the Knight Foundation whose president, Alberto Ibarguen, sits on the board of the Council on Foreign Relations, the top U.S. imperialist think-tank. Knight eventually turned Assange down, but only when dealing with the Times proved far more lucrative to liberal rulers in terms of public opinion. The Rockefeller-led liberal cabal of National Public Radio, Public Broadcasting System, and Corporation for Public Broadcasting have become, through their grantees Radio Pacifica and its "Democracy Now" program, the main media defenders of Assange and his Army intelligence mole Private Bradley Manning.

Would Iran Invasion Solve Capitol Gridlock?

The brightest glimpse of imperialist light through the dark Tea Party tunnel comes from Strategic Forecasting, Inc. Widely-cited Stratfor analysts provide U.S. corporations with global political insights they can use to boost profits. On October 27, Stratfor's founder George Freidman predicted Congressional "gridlock" on domestic issues in the wake of November's elections but said:

"If Obama were to use foreign policy to enhance his political standing through decisive action, and achieve some positive results in relations with foreign governments, the one place he could do it would be Iran." Freidman combines the same warning of risks and wishful thinking that accompanied Washington's initial forays into the endless Iraqi and Afghan conflicts:

"An attack on Iran would not be an invasion, nor would it be a short war. Like Yugoslavia in 1999, it would be an extended air war lasting an unknown number of months. There would be American POWs from aircraft that were shot down or suffered mechanical failure over Iranian territory. There would be many civilian casualties, which the international media would focus on. It would not be an antiseptic campaign, but it would likely (though it is important to reiterate not certainly) destroy Iran's nuclear capability and profoundly weaken its conventional forces."

As drastic as its proposal sounds, Stratfor in no way sits on the lunatic fringe. The ultra-establishment CFR immediately posted the piece on its own website, billing it a "Must Read."

Why Articles Are Not Signed

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual. While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

OUR FIGHT

⭐Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

⭐Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

⭐Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

⭐While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

⭐Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

⭐Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

⭐Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

⭐Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

⭐Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

⭐Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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Parents, Students, Teachers Battle Principal's Dictatorship

(This updates the article in the Nov. 3 CHALLENGE)

BROOKLYN, NY, November 1 — Our current struggle against attacks on students and teachers really started about five years ago when a new principal took over our high school. It was rumored that the previous principal had become disillusioned with the new edicts from the mayor and his corporate chancellor at a time when more centralized control was being imposed throughout the City's school system.

This new principal's two previous schools had closed and the rumors immediately started that our school was on the chopping block. The investigations of communist teachers started immediately. The principal said that teachers and students going to New Orleans to help re-build post-Katrina was a school trip. He wanted to know everything about it.

Next it was Harpers Ferry. He said that we could not go to commemorate John Brown's raid; that if we did, we would be investigated.

Other teachers in the school were harassed and investigated for all kinds of nonsense. But all these attacks were beaten back. At one point the principal even apologized for his "over-aggressiveness."

Some of us really didn't believe that a relatively "good" school (considering that all capitalist education is racist and full of brainwashing), could be destroyed to the point of closing. We have many excellent teachers and the students are great. Yet, on the first day of school this year the principal hinted for the first time that closing the school was possible. Our "grade" had slipped from a "high B" to a "C," and now it's rumored it could even be a "D."

So in this critical year what is the administration doing to improve education at our school? As CHALLENGE reported (11/3), it's still more investigations. Well we are not taking this lying down.

We went to the first PTA meeting to promote the October 2 Jobs rally in Washington, D.C. and we were there again at the second meeting. An official was asked a question about the October 2 rally. Before he could say much more than approve it, the principal jumped to the mike. He was hot. He ranted that he hadn't approved this rally, and that any activity with teachers and students is "a school trip" which he must know about. He even managed to compare the rally to a beach trip to Long Island approved by the Department of Education and held during school hours at which a student drowned.

High School Students in France fight back!

The official then "respectfully disagreed," saying that after school hours parents were responsible for their children, not the principal. Many parents at the meeting cheered this response, including several whose children had gone to the rally.

Throughout this struggle both parents and students have been very supportive. They've told the principal, the head of security and the outside city investigators that what students do after school is their parents' concern, not the principal's. The students have stood up to long and intimidating questioning. Parents have called and asked what they could do to help.

The last issue of CHALLENGE was a big hit. Study groups about education and communism are growing. Opportunities for growth are many, including more rallies and demonstrations. Community and church groups are organizing one such rally to protest racism against immigrants, set for November 13.

All the bosses, from Obama to Bloomberg to school principals, want us all to be passive and obedient. Instead, we need to fight back against their attacks and for communist revolution. Join us. ✪

Israel: Arab, Jewish Women Workers Unite in Day Care Fight

Day-care workers fight poverty conditions.

ISRAEL, November 2 — Arab and Jewish women day-care workers are showing multi-racial unity by battling against their extreme sexist exploitation. While some are fighting only for a wage increase, others are also demanding direct employment with full wages and benefits, as well as for an end to their demeaning working conditions.

Day-care workers are employed through a kind of a scam. They're considered "freelancers" and thus ineligible for a minimum wage and legal benefits. But the bosses treat them as employees. While they earn about $1,500-$2,000 a month and work far more than 50 hours a week, they're forced to pay operational costs out of their own pockets, so their net wage is usually below $1,000. Their bosses constantly bombard them with increasingly irrational and expensive demands disguised as "safety regulations" but actually amount to wage-cuts.

Last July, more than 700 day-care workers from throughout the country rallied in front of the ministry of employment, commerce and industry in Jerusalem, fueling their struggle with great enthusiasm and energy. (There are about 2,400 day-care workers in this status; more than 1,000 are unionized).

After this successful demonstration, which displayed the workers' strength, the government offered them a 4% annual wage increase, eventually totaling about 10%, as well as a pension arrangement and the formation of a trilateral forum. It will decide day-care system policy, including representatives of the workers, the government and the employing NGO's.

It was pretty clear that the union leadership wanted and supported the government's proposal, but the rank and file rejected it because it did not answer their needs. The proposed wage increase will start from an extremely low level since they're considered to be "freelancers" and thus not eligible for minimum wage and benefits. The offered wage increase will not be a significant change in their current situation; it won't even raise their salary above the minimum wage.

The workers also suspect that the ministries of finance and employment, commerce and industry will try to trick them, like the ministry of finance did when it simply ignored agreements with the students' union.

Day-care workers must rely on their own unity and militancy to continue their struggle to win better conditions and make the bosses pay. But as long as the Israeli government and the capitalist system it defends holds power, any gains workers win can be taken back.

The unity of Arab and Jewish day-care workers is a beacon of the anti-racist and anti-sexist unity that's needed to build a revolutionary movement to end the exploitation of all workers in the Middle East. ✪

Union Hacks, Bosses, Obama Gang-up — So

GM Workers Picket UAW HQ Over Wage-Cuts

DETROIT, MI, October 16 — "Eventually, we'll all be Tier 2!" That's what one woman said as about 200 autoworkers picketed outside the locked gates of UAW headquarters at Solidarity House today. They were protesting a 50% wage cut for 40% of the workforce at the Lake Orion GM assembly plant, UAW Local 5960. Workers came from a number of plants and locals, including Local 23 at the Indianapolis stamping plant where workers rejected wage-cuts, defied the Governor and ran UAW International reps out of their union hall.

Under the new contract, Tier 2 workers will make $14.50/hour and work alongside Tier 1 workers making $28/hour. Fearing a repeat of the Indianapolis rebellion, where wage-cuts were overwhelmingly voted down, 457 to 96, workers would not be allowed to vote on the wage-cuts. This is UAW President Bob King's "UAW for the 21st Century," where GM and the union "share common goals and a common vision" of keeping U.S. bosses on the top of the heap with a future of low wages and endless war.

The ability to cut wages without a ratification vote was implanted in the 2009 national contract, which was ratified, as a precondition for the Obama bailout and restructuring of GM and Chrysler. That contract slashed starting pay for new hires to $14.50/hour. In the fine print that was never included in the "highlights" distributed to workers as they voted, it also says that to produce sub-compacts at a profit, GM and the UAW "will work together...to arrive at innovative ways to staff these operations."

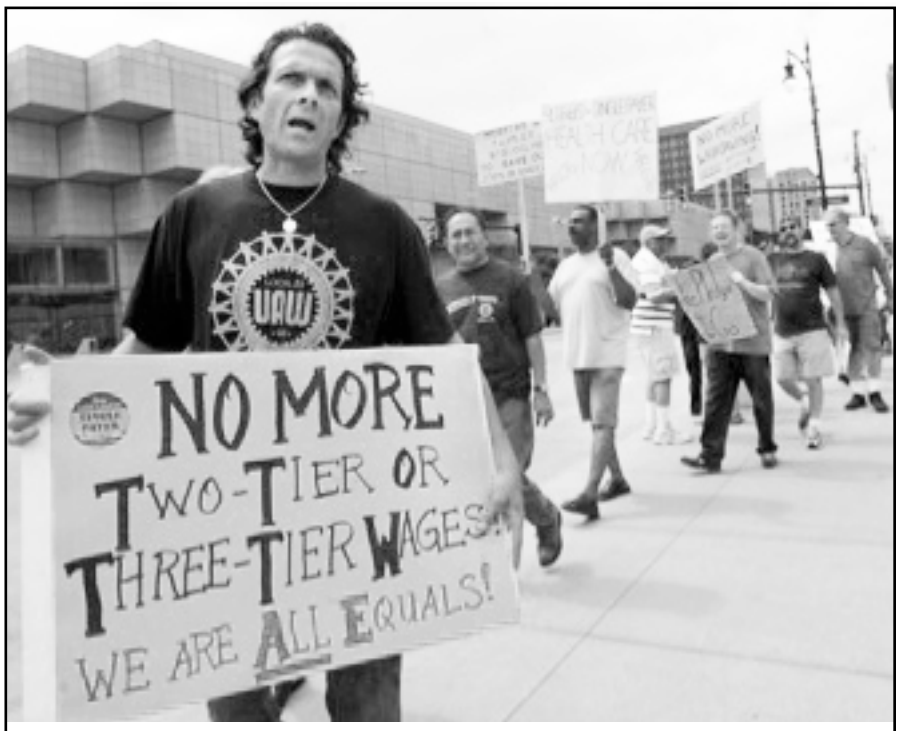
The Lake Orion workers were laid off last November and GM began retooling the plant to build a subcompact and compact car. The first workers called back will work at full wages and benefits. The rest of the workforce will come back at Tier 2 wages and either wait for a Tier 1 opening due to retirement or try to transfer to another GM plant.

One worker said, "The union knew the plant was going to be two-tier…they just waited till the last minute to drop it on us." And they plan to "drop it" on many more workers in order to keep members. "This is not going to go to other plants unless we are able to bring a [subcompact] car into Ford or Chrysler that we don't currently have. We might look at something similar for that situation," King said.

King forgot to mention imposing poverty wages on workers when he spoke at the October 2 March for Jobs and Justice. But that is really what it was all about. When you unite with the bosses and march behind them, you are on the slippery slope to fascism and world war, because that's how they solve their crises. They blabber about Republican "extremists," but it wasn't the Tea Party who slashed 200,000 auto jobs and cut our wages in half. It is King and Obama, acting on behalf of the biggest bosses and bankers in the world.

The liberals and union reformers also gave us the first non-union GM plant in the U.S. since the 1930's; a new lithium-ion battery plant near Detroit. The plant is partly government subsidized, did not call back one unemployed UAW member and pays less than $14/hour.

Since the Chrysler bailout of 1979, the UAW has given up billions in concessions and more than a million jobs, all in the name of "job security." Today they represent less than half of the U.S. auto industry and have lost two-thirds of our members. Class collaboration does not save jobs. Our security lies with the international working class, sharper and sharper class struggle and the development of mass communist consciousness. Ultimately we have to overthrow the bosses and abolish wage slavery with communist revolution. ✪



Angry auto workers blast union mis-leaders.

NYC Transit

continued from front page

generous" contracts to "lazy" transit workers.

The real source of the MTA's budget crisis is "debt service," costs that are more than 20% of the annual budget. Debt service feeds over two billion dollars worth of interest payments on MTA bonds to wealthy Wall Street bondholders, who compete against rival capitalists in other countries across the world for maximum profit. The U.S. bosses' so-called "recovery" is built directly on racist unemployment.

When the latest Local 100 president, John Samuelson, took office in January he promised to fight the MTA with an activist shop steward program to "affect on-time train and bus performance." However, instead of mass shut-downs of unsafe work, tools and vehicles or mass Local-wide demonstrations there have been mainly scattered small protests organized separately by job title and workplace divisions.

In press conferences and recent public hearings, the Local 100 leadership has spelled out their strategy: rely on lawyers, politicians and "creative" negotiations. But Local 100's "friends" in politics have not even sounded a fart against Mayor Bloomberg's promise not to lay off the KKKops that protect the capitalist rulers' interests. The courts have fined Local 100 for the 2005 strike, allowed layoffs after the MTA held public hearings and heard MTA arguments that delayed transit-worker raises. The last move saved the MTA nearly $106 million in 2009. This strategy is a loser.

Courts and politicians serve Wall Street and the rest of the capitalist ruling class. These bosses encourage workers to follow their rules and proceed in a "dignified" manner when workers fight back. But there is nothing fair or dignified about layoffs, fare hikes and service cuts that hit black, Latino and immigrant workers the hardest. Workers willing to really confront racist MTA bosses must be ready to break capitalist rules and rely on other rank-and-file workers, students and unemployed workers, not politicians, the courts or union mis-leaders.

Over the past few months rank-and-file transit workers as well as PLP students, teachers and industrial workers took action against the MTA. Thousands of transit workers protested with students in March to prevent cuts to student Metrocards. Individuals and small groups, especially laid-off transit workers, protested at MTA CEO Jay Walder's apartment building over the summer and challenged the rest of the MTA board at recent public hearings over cuts. Most significantly, only a May 4th break-away rally that surprised both Local 100 leaders and cops led to a delay in station-agent layoffs. It was a short-lived victory but it was the only one that came out of mass class struggle.

On May 4th only hours after the break-way demonstration of at least one thousand, a judge put a temporary injunction against layoffs until the MTA held public hearings on station-booth closings. Local 100 has not called a mass Local-wide rally since May 4th implying that if the union leadership can't control an action it won't do it.

These recent actions by transit workers are in a tradition of militant class struggle that the union bosses fear and that PLP draws inspiration from. It was a 1937 Brooklyn sit-down strike of 150 transit electrical power workers — grieving the firing of two of their co-workers — that won the TWU recognition in New York City. Three system-wide strikes in 1966, 1980 and 2005 and several smaller strikes, many illegal, have maintained relatively high job security wages and benefits for transit workers. Violent anti-racist rebellions of the 1960s and '70s encouraged U.S. bosses to open hundreds of thousands of jobs to black and Latino workers, including New York City Transit.

Today, the bosses are using their courts, banks and the rest of their state power to reverse the gains won through decades of strikes, job actions and rebellions. But with communist leadership, mass actions against the bosses can provide fertile ground to build the forces needed to win a lasting communist worker-run state, not just temporary victories which capitalism later reverses. ✪

France: As Millions Marched and Thousands Struck:
Sarkozy, Union Hacks Push to End Rank-and-File Movement

PARIS, October 31 — Two million workers and youth took to the streets in massive nation-wide demonstrations — 170,000 marching in Paris — to protest the ruling class's raising the retirement age and the rising unemployment caused by the bosses' economic crisis. A movement that began in the spring over pensions broadened to encompass a fight for jobs amid workers' rage over the tremendous disparity in wealth between the ruling class and the working class.

Large numbers continue to join the anti-retirement demonstrations against low wages and President Sarkozy's connivance with the wealthy. The focus on retirement "reform" stems from the fact that it affects the largest number of people. "The wage problem is overshadowed by the jobs problem which is overshadowed by the retirement problem," explained Antoine, an unemployed worker in his forties. "It all results from the unequal distribution of wealth." And all that is integral to capitalism's drive for profits. Only a communist revolution that destroys this system and replaces it with one run by and for workers can end these evils.

Initially Sarkozy and the sellout union leaders had figured that some one-day strikes and demonstrations would allow the workers to vent their anger and then the pension changes would sail through. But this became a miscalculation when the rank and file pushed past the union leaders, organizing unlimited strikes, with polls reporting from 65% to 71% of the population supporting them. It then became difficult for the union hacks to back out of the struggle and to control it.

While falling short of a general strike resembling the uprising in 1968, this rank-and-file-led movement spread to accomplish the following:

• Halted 50% of industry due to a lack of raw materials and fuel;

• A 33-day strike which included dock and refinery workers, aided by other workers supporting them, paralyzed 40% of oil refinery production, idling 99 ships, including 20 crude oil tankers and 15 refined fuel tankers, in harbors from Fos (near Marseilles) to Le Havre, costing the oil companies up to 300 million euros ($420 million);

- Blocked major highways leading to industrial parks and occupied toll booths, allowing free passage to drivers;
- University cafeteria workers provided free meals to students;
- Supportera joined with striking sanitation workers to dump garbage in front of the homes of leading CEOs;
- Caused cancellation of half the flights at Orly Airport on October 28;
- A hundred youth fought a police tear-gas attack after a demonstration in the shipbuilding city of Saint-Nazaire;
- Student unions shut six universities;
- Sanitation strikers blocked truck depots in Nantes and other cities, creating huge piles of garbage throughout the area.

Orly airport workers battle cops.

Workers are very conscious of the tremendous disparity in wealth and blame the rich — and Sarkozy who they view as representing the rich — for the economic crisis and resulting threats to their jobs and to the gains made since World War II. Rank-and-file refinery strikers told a PL'er at the Total Company facilities on the Atlantic coast that their grandparents had fought for many of their gains in wages, vacations and pensions and that not fighting to retain them would be a betrayal of their forebears.

This fight against the government, and the workers' view of the struggle as one between classes, to a certain degree reflected a political consciousness which the reformist union leaders did not foresee when they tried to limit the strikes to one-day walkouts. Many workers feel that the union officials are betraying the movement. The sentiment of auto and rail workers and truckers was expressed by one, saying the union leaders "have been doing that for 40 years. Urge people to go out on strike, wave red flags and then negotiate with the bosses. But who gives a damn about the union bureaucrats. At least we're fighting and that's all that counts. Won't be a revolution but it [is a] chance to show them what we think."

The union mis-leaders' reformism was stark when including in a press statement a demand for "respect for private property" which implied a condemnation of the militant youth who were fighting the cops

But the inter-generational unity of the working class was mirrored in the support for the strikers shown by the youth who not only closed hundreds of high schools but showed up at picket lines to back the workers. The picketing workers point to that development with pride. Both young and old felt that by fighting Sarkozy's raising the retirement age they were fighting for more jobs for first-time job-seekers.

However, a weakness in the struggle was reflected in the movement's weak links with the 400,000 undocumented immigrant workers, but possibly even more importantly with the millions of documented immigrant and French-born largely Arab and black African workers who face daily racist discrimination. They are a potent force that could immeasurably strengthen the working class's overall fight.

Workers at the docks and refineries and on the railroad have now voted to suspend their strikes. But meanwhile workers in six Air France unions have called for a strike for November 4 and another mass demonstration is planned for November 6, despite the passage of the pension law changes and Sarkozy's expected signature.

Assuming the enactment of this law, and the presumed scaling down of the struggle, it will have reflected the failure of even this massive movement to defeat the rulers' attack on workers' pensions.

PL'er brings solidarity greetings from U.S. workers to Nantes sanitation strikers.

On the other hand the movement has sharpened the class struggle and the class consciousness of millions of workers who have stood ready to fight the bosses and their government and recognize the tie between both.

This consciousness and anger of the working class in France cries out for revolutionary communist leadership. The absence of the latter is very evident. The French "Communist" Party, which has had a big influence in the main union, the CGT, long ago abandoned communist principles and actively tries to steer the rank-and-file's militancy into voting for them.

Certainly fertile ground exists on which to advance revolutionary communist consciousness. This could lead to workers' recognition of the need to destroy the entire profit system, the bosses and their government servants; and not just to try to maintain the reforms which the ruling class inevitably takes away as part of its attempt to deal with capitalism's crisis. ✪

Mid-East Oil Wars

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in tri-corner hats, who plan to run the table in the next corporate takeover of Washington. Though Tom DeLay may now be on trial for corruption in Texas, the spirit of his K Street lives on in a Lott client list that includes Northrop Grumman and Goldman Sachs."

Arms merchant Grumman and arch-imperialist financier Goldman-Sachs have similar interests as Exxon's and JP Morgan's war-making goals.

After an expected setback at the polls, the liberal imperialists' message to the masses is to rally for Obama in 2012. The ballot box, however, is a dead end; every candidate fronts for one capitalist faction or another. PLP strives to build our revolutionary communist party through militant action in the factories and unions, on the campuses and among working-class GI's, in the churches and other community mass organizations, against the imperialist billionaires and their politician stooges.

Such action will hasten the revolution to obliterate the profit-driven war-makers and establish the working class in state power. ✪

Obama's Raids, Deportations Outstrip Bush:

Racist Anti-Immigration Laws Attack All Workers

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses around the world.

Arizona passed a racist anti-immigrant law (SB1070) on April 23rd that upped the ante for the main imperialist ruling class and its representatives in the federal government to address immigration reform. Anti-racist and liberal groups attacked this law as a bitter assault on undocumented immigrant workers across the entire country. Though this is true, we must be clear: the imperialist U.S. ruling class has always treated immigrants in a brutal fascist manner and only opposes SB1070 because they have a more insidious and racist plan in the works.

One provision of Arizona's SB1070 allows any policeman who makes "lawful contact" with an undocumented immigrant to "determine the immigration status of the person" and to verify this with the Federal government. This is to be done whenever a "reasonable suspicion exists that the person is an alien who is unlawfully present." This effectively allows the cops to racially profile Latino workers but of course also allows the cops to hold anyone they want until they check with the feds; that is, they can hold a black worker, for instance, until they check with Immigration and Customs Enforcement(ICE).

A different provision of the law requires Arizona police to do this or face law suits. So the cops are now legally required to be as racist as possible to avoid lawsuits. Other provisions make it illegal to help or transport undocumented workers, which would make it illegal for a citizen child to help his/her immigrant parents pay rent or get to work. This law is in effect reminiscent of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 that required marshals in "free" states to capture and return escaped slaves to the murderous slave owners in the South.

CIR: Police Terror, Slavery, Forced Military Service

By making racism the explicit law of the land as opposed to just an accepted-under-the-table practice, Arizona upset many liberal and anti-racist groups who are now putting pressure on Obama to pass the "comprehensive immigration reform" (CIR) that he campaigned for.

It is important to know what Obama's CIR would be. He has not put forward a specific bill that can be analyzed. He has only stated a "guiding principle" which says, in part, "our immigration policy should be driven by our best judgment of what is in the economic interest of the United States." He specifically mentions securing the borders and protecting the interest of "American workers." If we want a better understanding of what he means, we must look at the recent practice of his administration and past policies he has supported and continues to praise.

His administration has been attacking and deporting workers at a rate that outstrips George W. Bush's administration (see CHALLENGE, July 2010). In practice, Obama has created more widespread terror in the immigrant community than the Arizona racists could ever accomplish; this is what state power means for the imperialist ruling class.

While the CIR policy has not been explicitly stated, Obama has repeatedly looked to the "McCain-Kennedy bill" of 2007 as an ideal (see July 1st 2010 speech at American University). At the time CHALLENGE showed how this bill would effectively create a 13-year indentured servitude for currently undocumented workers in exchange for the possibility of papers. In order to become eligible for a green card, immigrants must first register and be employed for eight continuous years. They must also declare themselves criminals, pay a fine in the thousands for their "criminality," and display "good moral character" during the conditional years. This means any worker who fights back against their rotten working conditions risks deportation. Even a naturalized citizen who is suspected of fighting back or not displaying "good moral character" can be deported under the Intelligence Reform Act.

CIR also would add 20,000 border police and enact the DREAM Act that would ask thousands of young people to join the military to get their papers (see CHALLENGE, 14 April 2010). The ruling class has a two-part agenda with the DREAM Act. First, it hopes to increase the size of the army. Second, it hopes to create mass patriotism among immigrant youth by portraying the DREAM Act as a way for young people to go to college.

The DREAM Act provides a conditional visa for six years during which the child needs to go to college or the military for two years. Considering it does not provide federal financial aid to these children who are poor to begin with, their ultimate "choice" is the military. When one joins the military, it is a whole package of at least four years, not two. It is after the six years, they are eligible to apply for a green card. During this entire time, and afterwards, they are kept under close watch and are subject to deportation.

Even though the bosses have not enacted the DREAM Act they have been able to build up a patriotic movement around it, especially by appealing to liberal pro-immigrant youth groups such as the Chicano Student Movement (MEChA).

Anti-Immigrant Racism Divides All Workers

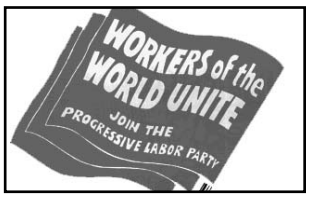
No matter which racist law is enacted, or even if neither are, the situation on the ground for immigrants is brutal racism and super-exploitation. Immigrants function as a reserve army of labor, used as a threat to thrash all workers. Obama is continuing and increasing the number of raids on undocumented workers. Throughout the garment district in Los Angeles a standard practice is to call the Immigration Police the day before pay-day in order to avoid paying workers.

After Hurricane Katrina the ruling class brought in hundreds of workers from Latin America to "rebuild" and kept them fenced in like prisoners in work camps. They refused to hire displaced black workers and treated the immigrants like slaves. The bosses used racism to divide the immigrant and citizen workers resulting in brutal attacks on both groups.

Attacks on immigrants are not aimed at creating "American jobs" or stopping terrorists; the ruling class's purpose is and has always been to terrorize immigrant and citizen workers alike. The bosses use this terror to enforce super-exploitation of both immigrant and black workers, ensuring a mass of workers earning nearly (sometimes actually) unlivable wages. We must realize that the system that deports "illegal" workers is the system that creates the conditions for workers to flee in search of jobs. Workers are constricted within national borders to keep control of the working class.

Obama and the liberal ruling class would like an immigration policy that is seemingly less thuggish than the open racists of Arizona, but the essence of their CIR is slavery and forced military service. The ruling class only wants an appearance of tolerance for immigrants in order to trick our working class brethren into becoming complicit in imperialism and racist wars. They know they must have a disciplined working class to use and abuse in order to serve the needs of their racist empire.

The ruling class, as represented by Obama, requires both an increase in police attacks on workers and a long, hard road to legalization. This group of politicians is currently the most dangerous to the working class. The workers must abandon all politicians and join a movement that can eventually destroy borders and racism, the Progressive Labor Party. ✪



Capitalism's Cholera Kills in Haiti

continued from front page

ment so limited, causing further unnecessary deaths? The media will tell us how Doctors Without Borders (Spain) staff a clinic in St. Marc and MINUSTAH troops built a new tent clinic next door. Those are very useful in preventing deaths, it's true. But they won't say why a system focused on profit never manages anything but makeshift, last-minute medical care instead of planning health care rationally. Forty percent of Haitians don't have access to clean water, and 80% lack proper sanitation, including toilets and soap.

The truth is that anything other than maximizing profit will always be secondary to capitalist ruling classes, which is why their responses to perfectly predictable disasters of their making are always so cruel and inadequate. That too is a preventable crime, as preventable as cholera. Unfortunately capitalism is not so easily treated. But we workers without borders are working on it.

Many studies are available which point towards a better understanding of such painful events. Eduardo Galeano (The Open Veins of Latin America) takes aim at flawed capitalist explanations of disease when he sarcastically recommends placing signs in the deadly areas of industrial pollution in Latin America: DO NOT BREATHE.

The Guyanese historian Walter Rodney succinctly punctured the racist myth that certain sectors of our class are doomed to underdevelopment in his much-loved book How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, which drew on André Gunder Frank's concept of "the development of underdevelopment." Mike Davis's Planet of Slums and Patrick Bond's Global Apartheid show the consequences of modern imperialism to be nothing less than racism on a world scale.

The rural and urban working class of the Artibonite valley must return to the revolutionary history of their region enshrined in Crête Pierrot, where Dessalines in 1802 led African slave soldiers to crush the French army in the turning-point battle of the revolution. Then workers will give a different explanation of what caused so many deaths in so many generations. ✪

Teacher Assassinated in Haiti

continued from p. 8

But to triumph over state violence, like workers everywhere under intensifying fascism when all the imperialists are edging closer to global war, they need to create an international communist party working together in many countries simultaneously. The PLP in Haiti, with links to the Party in the neighboring Dominican Republic, the Caribbean and Central and South America, as well as the U.S. and Europe, could be a formidable force pushing beyond borders, pushing past the reformist limits of the current battles, to the revolutionary solution to workers' problems.

Imagine if the fierce class struggle in France had concrete links to the struggle in Haiti, Guadeloupe and Martinique, through the Party working among labor migrants from Haiti to the rest of the Caribbean and from the Caribbean to France. Such a revolutionary movement will be built through steps like this Haiti solidarity campaign, which has organized protest letters from teachers' and other unions throughout the Caribbean, France, Canada, Latin America and the U.S.

The Boston Teachers' Union and the CUNY professors' union PSC-CUNY have sent such letters and are circulating the petition. UNNOH and the Coalition have publicized these letters from different countries in Haiti's media. A Haitian teachers' union leader is speaking at campuses in Boston and New York this week to step up the campaign. He said it's also his union's duty to offer solidarity to workers in struggle, such as to teachers being investigated at a Brooklyn high school for bringing students to the October 2 Washington, D.C. demonstration for jobs (see article, p. 3).

But a liberal or union-based mass movement without communist ideas, even if international, will always feed illusions — despite repeated lessons to the contrary — that capitalism can deliver justice, education, housing, water, health, jobs and peace. Ultimately only a global communist movement can create the unbreakable international unity of workers capable of destroying a dying system, even under fascism and world war.

Far from being isolated, these workers and students in Haiti can lead us all along the road through chaos and death to the real change we all seek, which requires a revolution. Our friends and comrades in Haiti are being steeled in battle; let us fight at their side with the red flag we all must carry. ✪

Boston: Students March vs. Racist Police Terror

BOSTON, MA., October 29 — About 50 students and faculty from Roxbury Community College (RCC) marched to the police station today to protest the vicious October 22 police beating of a sixteen-year-old-youth in the Administration Building. The youth had run away from a Department of Youth Services facility in order to be present at the birth of his child.

A student recorded the incident with her cell-phone camera and posted it on Youtube while a cop attempted to intimidate her. If not for her, the incident would have been swept under the rug. No one except those who had witnessed it knew it had happened. The RCC administration kept it silent for almost a week, helping the police cover up their crime. They didn't address it on the campus until the Youtube video made it an issue in Boston.

At that point, the RCC President Gomes and VP Mercomes tried to distance the college from the "bad press" since "the boy was not an RCC student." They showed their true colors as lackeys of the local ruling class, who will do anything to protect the interests of capitalism.

Students immediately organized a response, posted signs around the school announcing a march to the police station. Once there, students expressed their outrage at the police and college administration while demanding the firing of the cops guilty of the beating. One student spoke about the police "serving and protecting" the rich and not the working class, giving a political analysis to the class anger being expressed.

Now it remains the task of these student leaders along with PL'ers and other anti-racists to organize the whole RCC community to take a stand against racist police terror. ✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Arctic oil, gas can spark big wars

LAT, 10/8 — If we didn't already have the phrase Cold War, we'd have to invent it to describe the power struggle taking place for Arctic Ocean resources.

Companies such as BP and OAO Gazprom are readying themselves for the last great energy frontier. Russia, the United States, Canada, and Iceland are vying for control of the wealth and power that exploitation of the Arctic will create.

…Trying to bring the frozen wastelands around the North Pole into the global economy involves two huge risks: catastrophic climate change, and a major war.

….There is already geopolitical conflict brewing in the region…The Russians are planning to grab control of as much of the arctic as they can. But so are Canada, the U.S., Iceland, Denmark, and Norway. If the Chinese can think of some plausible reason for saying it is theirs, no doubt they will be there soon as well.

Rich see poor as 'genetic mud'

GW, 10/22 — ….We now know that genes play little part in why one sibling, social class or ethnic group is more likely to suffer problems than another.

….Politicians may be the reason why the media has so far failed to report the small role of genes. The political right believes that genes largely explain why the poor are poor, as well as twice as likely as the rich to be mentally ill. To them, the poor are genetic mud, sinking to the bottom of the genetic pool….

Instead, the Human Genome Project is rapidly providing a scientific basis for the political left. Childhood maltreatment, economic inequality and excessive materialism seem the main determinants.

Few volunteers, so U.S. buys thugs

NYT, 10/24 — Contractors were necessary at the start of the Iraq war because there simply were not enough soldiers…. Even now — with many contractors discredited for unjustified shootings and a lack of accountability amply described in documents — the military cannot do without them. There are more contractors than actual members of the military serving in the Afghanistan war….A failure to enforce rules of engagement that bind the military, endangered civilians [so] contractors often shot with little discrimination….

The Iraqis who were shot at…were nearly always civilians…and for all the debates about their necessity, it is clear from the documents that the contractors appeared notably ineffective at keeping themselves and the people they were paid to protect from being killed.

No jail for biggest drug dealers

NYT, 10/15 — CVS Caremark has agreed to pay $77.6 million to settle an investigation that its drugstores allowed widespread sales of cough medicines used to manufacture the stimulant methamphetamine.

CVS…acknowledged that it has sold pseudoephedrine to criminals who used it to make meth….The government said it would not pursue criminal charges against CVS. The company will start a compliance and ethics program.

Cop racism wherever bosses rule

GW, 10/22 — Black people are 26 times more likely them white people to be stopped and searched by police in England and Wales, the most glaring examples of "Racial profiling" researchers have seen, according to an international report.

….Asians were 6.3 times more likely to be stopped than whites.

Iraq oil means U.S. won't leave

GW, 10/22 — A senior Obama administration official said: "…there are no plans to keep troops after December 2011. We are drawing down and all will be out of Iraq."

However, unofficially Washington expected to retain a force in Iraq after December 2011, as well as bases to protect oil interests.

Rulers blame "culture" for poverty

NYT 10/25 — to the editor: The concept of culture as a cause of poverty and the related academic debate are primarily politically driven….The use of culture as a cause of poverty provides an academic hook to explain away real major causes of poverty like race, class, and disability, these are problematic to conservative political forces who want society to be blameless for poverty.

Haiti: Rulers Can Kill A Teacher But Can't Shut Down A Movement!

Workers in Haiti protest brutality of UN troops protecting U.S.-backed rulers.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, October 22 — Jean Filbert Louis was buried here today. He was a teacher who police killed on October 8 while demonstrating with his union (UNNOH) to bring hundreds of thousands of children, abandoned by the education system, back to school.

After a religious service at the Eglise de Dieu de Nazon, the body of comrade Louis was carried by hundreds of his comrades, accompanied by his mother and family, to the very doors of the Ministry of Education where he was shot down two weeks before.

"Here's the gift you gave us, the body of our comrade," said a rally leader. "We demanded schools for all our children, and your response was to give us the dead body of our teacher." The Minister had offered money to pay for the funeral, which was contemptuously refused — "We won't give you the chance to wash his blood off your hands by paying for a funeral!"

They demanded justice for the Minister's complicity in this crime, which they know means fighting the rotten "justice" system every step of the way, corrupt as it is. The police and government are protecting and refusing to act against the policewoman who hundreds of people clearly saw shooting a projectile into their comrade's head. They again demanded schools for the abandoned children, better salaries and working conditions for teachers and financial aid for parents. After the demonstration, it was decided to continue mobilizing every Friday for justice for comrade Louis' family and union, and for the just demands for which he gave his life.

The coalition of teachers' and other unions, parents, students and youth has issued a call for international solidarity to help them fight a whole series of violent attacks by police and UN troops. (See box for an on-line petition of support which PLP urges all our readers to circulate internationally). The coalition statement about this latest murder reads in part:

"This heinous act is a clear signal from the team in power to the people and social organizations, showing their evident willingness to sink into dictatorship and to prohibit any form of demonstration to demand better conditions of life and quality education for all the children of Haiti. It is a tangible sign of the type of 'democracy' that the powerful intend to build: a democracy where the right to make demands and protest is banned forthwith. Furthermore, this heinous act makes us see the extent to which this team shows no respect for human life in general and teachers' lives in particular.

"It also expresses the Haitian state's denial of the right to free quality public education for all. Faced with protesters carrying nothing but placards demanding better education for all children and decent living and working conditions for teachers and students, the government team and the Minister Joel Desrosiers Jean Pierre chose to use weapons…. The Executive Committee of the Coalition launches an impassioned call to all progressive organizations here and elsewhere, to mobilize to obtain justice for the victim and to make an appropriate response, so as to avoid the repetition of such acts."

PLP salutes these workers for advancing under fire, fighting for schooling for abandoned children and for their own needs. When they take casualties, they immediately schedule more demonstrations to continue the fight, and reach out to workers worldwide for support. Communist solidarity with them shows that Haiti's workers are not alone despite the bosses' attempts to isolate them. We support their anti-fascist fight.

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WE DEMAND AN END TO THE VIOLENCE AGAINST TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN HAITI!

[www.ipetitions.com/petition/haitisolidarity]

We the undersigned are responding to a call for international solidarity sent out by the executive committee of a coalition of education organizations in Haiti after the police killing of a protesting teacher, signed on October 11, 2010 by the coordinators of the coalition: François Mario, CNEH (teachers' union), Eugène Jean, UPEPH (parents' organization), and Josué Mérilien, UNNOH (teachers' union). We stand in solidarity with teachers, students, and parents in Port-au-Prince who are organizing for schooling for Haitian children abandoned by the education system, and for decent living and working conditions for teachers and students. We demand an end to the systematic violence against them:

- On October 8, 2010, at a demonstration by teachers and students at the Ministry of Education, a projectile fired from a National Police vehicle killed Jean Filbert Louis, a member of the teachers' union UNNOH;
- On October 4, 2010, the opening day of the school year, a demonstration of teachers and students at the Ministry of Education was tear-gassed by the anti-riot police unit CIMO, backed by troops of the UN force MINUSTAH;
- On September 30, 2010, a student leader from GREPS (Group for Reflection on Social Problems), at the School of Ethnology, was wounded near his home by gunmen firing more than ten bullets at him and a friend;
- On May 24, 2010, MINUSTAH troops raided the campus of the School of Ethnology, seizing computers and detaining and threatening an activist student from GREPS — three GREPS students were then expelled from that School;
- On January 12, 2010, just before the earthquake struck, Professor JnAnil Louis-Juste of the School of Social Sciences (FASCH), an intellectual and political leader at the university and beloved mentor of many activist students, was assassinated by gunmen near the campus.

We strongly protest to the Ministry of Education, the Administration of the State University of Haiti (UEH), the National Police, and MINUSTAH against the police murder of our brother Jean Filbert Louis and all these outrages, clearly a systematic attempt to destroy any organized movement of students and teachers in Haiti who (in the words of the Coalition) "dare to make demands, to denounce, to condemn, and to protest."

These heinous criminal acts are (in the

Coalition's words) "a clear signal from the team in power to the people and social organizations, showing their evident willingness to sink into dictatorship and to prohibit any form of demonstration to demand better living conditions and quality education for all the children of Haiti." In solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the Haitian education Coalition, we call also for the satisfaction of their just demands in education — especially schooling for the hundreds of thousands of children abandoned to the streets and camps by the education system.

*[NOTE: Signing online automatically sends your signature to Jean Filbert Louis' union UNNOH. You may also e-mail the signed petition to Edmond Mulet, Director of MINUSTAH, at **presse@minustah.org**; Jean Vernet Henry, Rector of the State University of Haiti, at **jv_henry@yahoo.fr**; and the GREPS students at **GREPS01@yahoo.fr**.]*

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